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[illegible] - Leonard L. Bacon

Republic of China's Commando Raids in the
Offshore Islands Area

Since last fall there have been two major changes in the pattern of the Republic of China's probes against the mainland. The first is a new emphasis on the hit-and-run commando raids. These raids have the primary aim of harassing and secondarily of picking up items of intelligence value. Several of these raids were mounted last fall; these were the only operations to our knowledge in which all the men probing the mainland were not killed or captured.

The other change has been the increased involvement of the offshore islands. In recent years raids rarely originated from the offshores. Since last fall, however, the commando raids increasingly have been based on these islands or have attacked targets in their vicinity. Several raids have been attempted from Wu-chiu, the lightly defended island midway between the Quemoy and Matsu groups. Tung-yin, the island about 35 miles from the Matsu group, has also been used for the commando raids. A raid on April 9, 1964 from Quemoy against the island of Amoy was repulsed by the Chinese Communists with 7 out of 13 men killed.

The most recent incident of this type, on May 16, resulted in the first exchange of high explosive shells between the mainland and the offshores in two years. The incident occurred when a GRC raiding team in the vicinity of Matsu tried to escape from the mainland beach and was cut off by Chinese Communist patrol boats. Matsu artillery opened fire on the boats and some of the shells may have hit the mainland. Two or three hours later the Chinese Communists fired 112 rounds of high explosives against Matsu, probably in retaliation (Taipei's 1130). Since then there has been no firing of high explosive shells by either side. The incident, however, points up the danger of upsetting the quasi-ceasefire situation in the offshores area as a result of GRC probing from the offshore islands or attacking targets in their vicinity.

About a year ago we pointed out to the GRC that some of the smaller

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offshore islands were highly vulnerable to attack and that it would be unwise to assume the United States would assist the GRC in defending these islands in the event the Chinese Communists retaliated against GRC raids or similar types of provocative actions mounted from them (Department's CA-10363 dated March 22, 1963). We may be approaching the point where another admonition along similar lines would be in order.

Enclosures:

1. Taipei's 1130.
2. Department's CA-10363.

cc: Amembassy TAIPEI

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